

**Butterflies and
Odonates of the
Indian Himalayan
Region**



Bibliography on the Butterflies and Odonates of the Indian Himalayan Region

Introduction

Insects account for about 65% of all described species on earth. As there are a large number of studies on insects because of their huge diversity, it is beyond the scope of this compilation to focus on all insect groups. However, we have attempted here to compile a bibliographic database of butterflies and odonates reported from the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) to understand trends on research and identify gaps in knowledge.

A. Butterflies

Introduction

Lepidoptera is one of the most widespread and widely recognizable insect order in the world. Butterflies are the most studied group amongst insects and the best known insects after ants. Butterflies belong to "flagship taxa" in biodiversity inventories. Since early 18th century butterflies have been studied systematically and about 19,238 species have been documented worldwide (Heppner, 1998). The butterflies were categorized into ten families Papilionidae, Pieridae, Danaidae, Satyridae, Nymphalidae, Amathusiidae, Acraeidae, Erycinidae and Lycaenidae, and Hesperioidea. Except for Hesperioidea all the butterflies are placed in single superfamily Papilionoidea under suborder Rhopalocera and the latter is separated out into superfamily Hesperioidea under suborder Grypocera.

In the Indian subcontinent 1,504 species of butterflies have been recorded so far (Smetacek, 1992) and over 800 species are reported from the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR). The earliest collections of butterflies from the Himalaya were perhaps by Hardwick and Carl von Hugel during 1846-1848. Hardwick collections were described by Doubleday and Gray in 1846 and Hugel collection by Redtenbacher in 1848. Many workers have worked on butterflies from India including the IHR. Pioneers among them were Marshall and DeNiceville (1882-1890), Bingham (1905, 1907) Seitz (1906-1928), Antram (1928), Evans (1932), Wynter-Blyth (1957) and Varshney (1985, 1990, 1997). De Rhe-Philipe (1931) was probably the first to publish a comprehensive list of 246 butterflies from Himalayas of Shimla region which he has included later in his book 'Butterflies of Indian Region' (1957). Evans (1932) identified 1,438 species of butterflies from oriental region including 417 species from western Himalaya and 962 species north eastern Himalaya.

Antram (1924) reported about 512 butterflies excluding Lycaenidae and Hesperioidea from North-East Himalayan region. According to his record maximum number of butterflies was found in North Eastern Himalayas that extends into Sikkim. He also listed them as 'very rare' and 'rare' which was later incorporated in the schedule-I (Part-4) and schedule-II (Part-2) of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (WPA).

Methods

Online research databases were searched using the search terms "Himalaya" and name of the six Himalayan States such as Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and West Bengal. Lamas (1991) provided a list of 175 periodical publications, dealing exclusively with lepidopterological studies were also referred, which were available. All the information was entered in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet and arranged alphabetically to remove any duplication. All the analyses were carried out in Microsoft Excel to determine the trend of research over the decades, the emphasised areas and the knowledge gap.

Results and Discussion

The bibliography on butterfly fauna of the IHR includes 276 unique entries covering a period of nearly two centuries, starting from 1857 to 2016 (Fig. 6.2). We categorized the articles in four distinct ways: A) The first category was based on the regions of five Himalayan states (Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh) where the studies were carried out. B) The second category was based on their publication dates, in which the studies were grouped in 10-year intervals from 1857 to 2016; this enabled us to see the research trends and patterns. C) The third category was based on the subject focus of the research; the publications were categorized based on the broad subjects (ecology and behaviour, taxonomy, evolution, conservation and climate change impact) at which the research was carried out. D) Articles were also categorized based on the five butterfly families which were the object of research in the various publications where no distinct pattern was found. Most of the studies were found to cover all the butterfly families (Fig 6.3). Family Nymphalidae and Papilionidae were included in most of the studies because of their large size and colour patterns. However, in many of the studies family Hesperidae was not included.

Geographical Distribution of Publications

A large number of studies are from Jammu and Kashmir, followed by Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand which shows that western Himalayan region was in focus during British era in India (Fig 6.1).

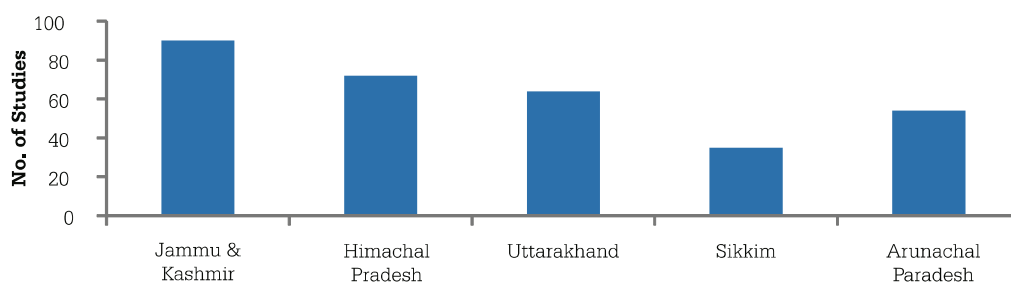


Figure 6.1 State wise distribution of publications

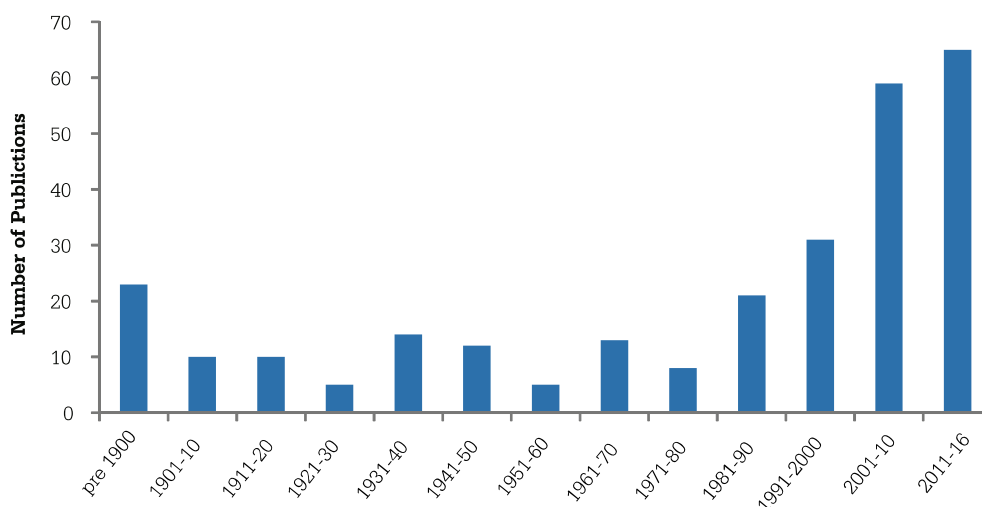


Figure 6.2 Temporal pattern of publications on butterfly of Indian Himalayan Region

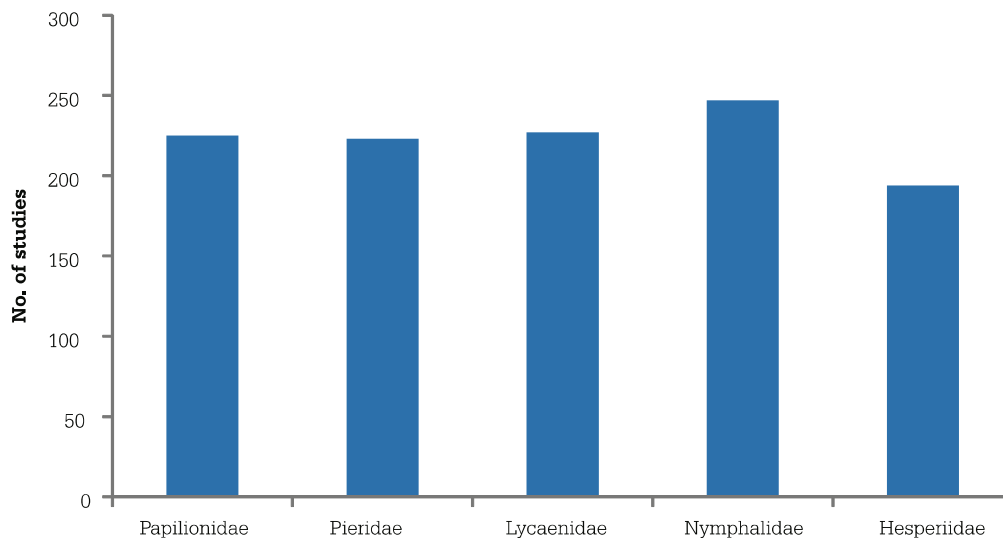


Figure 6.3 Distribution of scientific literature among different families

In recent years there is some progress in the study of butterfly biodiversity from Himalayan region. However most of the researches are confined only to certain localities and these are inventory checklists (Fig. 6.4). Considering the total area of the region information generated is very meagre. Detailed studies focusing on butterfly biodiversity, ecology and evolution is needed from Himalayan region. This information will help in proper revision of status of butterflies in WPA.

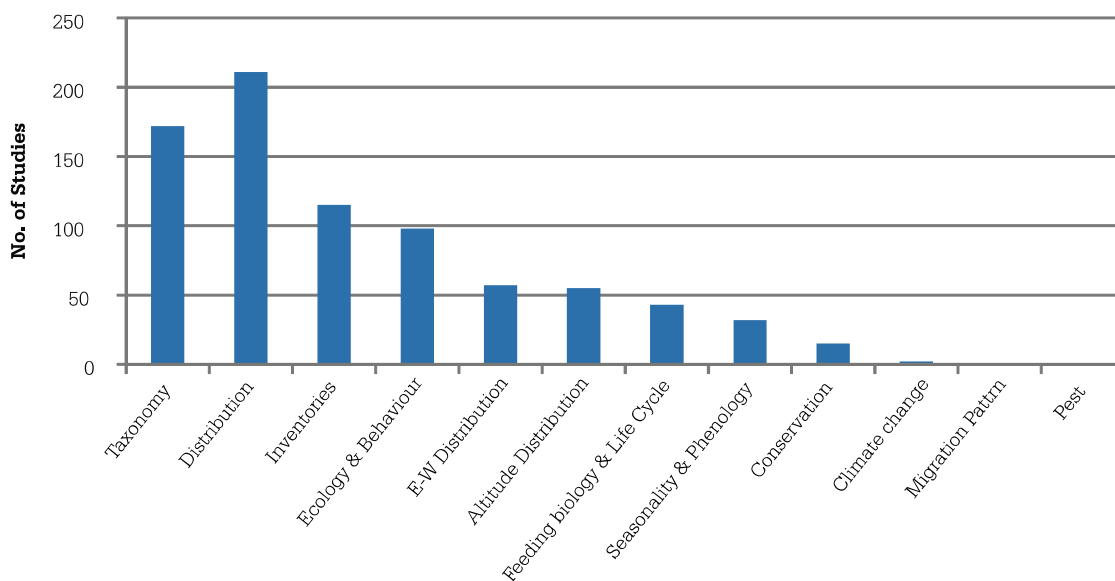


Figure 6.4 Number of publications on butterflies of the Indian Himalayan Region in different subject categories

B. Odonates

The Indian Himalayan Region is bestowed with very rich and diverse odonata assemblages. Within the Indian sub-region, the odonatafauna of the Himalaya has so been most extensively studied. During the period of late 1950's to early 1980's, number of odonatologists have studied the dragonflies of the Himalaya (Kiauta, 1975), consequent to which about 225 species, out of approximately 600 Indian species of odonata, have been recorded from the Himalayan region alone (i.e. "Western, Central and Eastern Himalaya). These include a considerable number of new species and a large number of new records made from this region since the publication of Fauna of British India.

Variations in the topography and altitudes in Himalaya play important roles in changing the climatic conditions within short distances. The fauna is composed largely of tropical elements derived from the fauna of Indo-malayan sub-region of the Oriental region. It is presumed that after the elevation of the Himalayas, odonata from different parts of the Oriental region have reached the mountains and constitute the present fauna. Hence it is reasonable to think that both hills and forests of the mountains play a great role in the formation of barriers as well as in speciation. Most of the endemic species have narrow geographic distribution and are more susceptible to extinction due to natural and anthropogenic changes in the environment. The endemic Odonata fauna of India is largely concentrated in four global biodiversity hotspots i.e., the Western Ghats, Western Himalaya, Indo Burmese (includes Andaman Islands) and Sunda land (includes Nicobar Islands).

The scientific literature on odonate fauna of South Asia is available from 18th Century, but it suffers from lack of digitalization and many of these pioneering works on odonate fauna of India are inaccessible. Moreover, information on odonatological studies in the IHR was not available on a single platform. This article comprises the information on available scientific literature on Odonate fauna of the IHR, particularly the trends in research and gaps in knowledge.

Methods

For preparation of the database on the Bibliography of Odonate Fauna of the IHR, we searched using the search terms "Himalaya", "Fraser", "Corbett", "Leiftinck", "Kumar", "Mitra" and name of the six Himalayan States viz., Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and West Bengal. All the information were entered in a Microsoft Excel Spread sheet and arranged alphabetically to remove any duplication. All the analyses were carried out in Microsoft Excel to determine the trend of research over the decades, the emphasised areas and the knowledge gaps.

Results and Discussion

The bibliography on Odonatefauna of the IHR includes 139 unique entries covering a period over centuries, starting from 1915 to 2016 (Fig 6.5). We categorized the articles in three distinct ways: A) The first category was based on overall distribution (Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts of West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh), taxonomic revision and new addition to the fauna, where the studies were carried out. B) The second category was based on their publication dates, in which the studies were grouped in 10-year intervals from 1900 to 2016; this enabled us to see the research trends and patterns. C) The third category was based on the subject focus of the research; the publications were categorized based on the levels of broad subject (ecology and behaviour, taxonomy, evolution, conservation and climate change impact) at which the research was carried out (Fig. 6.6 & 6.7). ?

Temporal Pattern of Publications

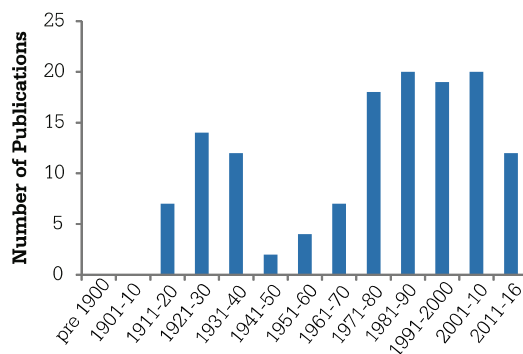


Figure 6.5 Temporal patterns of publications on odonates of the Indian Himalayan Region

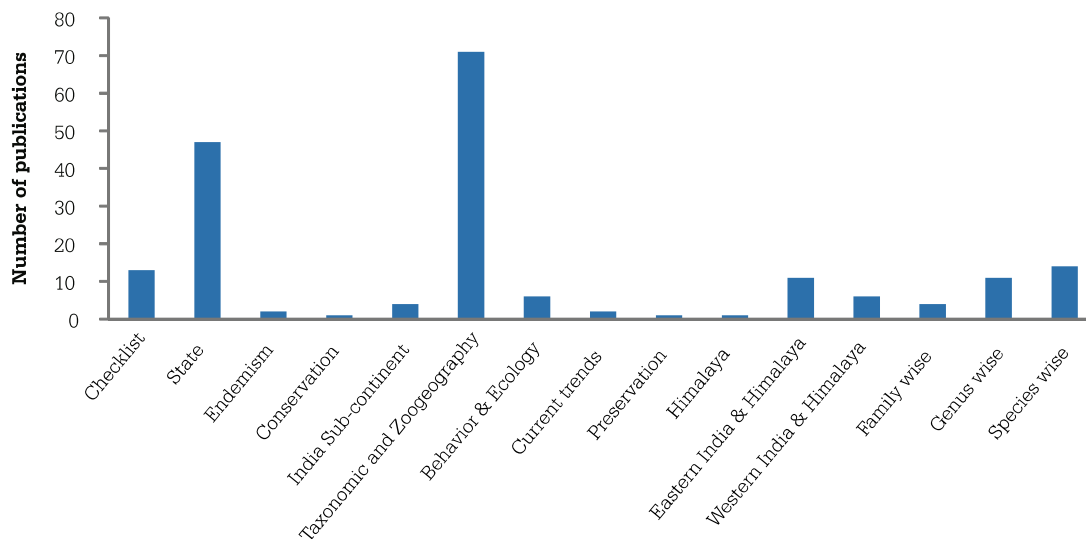


Figure 6.6 Comprehensive classifications of publication on odonates of the Indian Himalayan Region

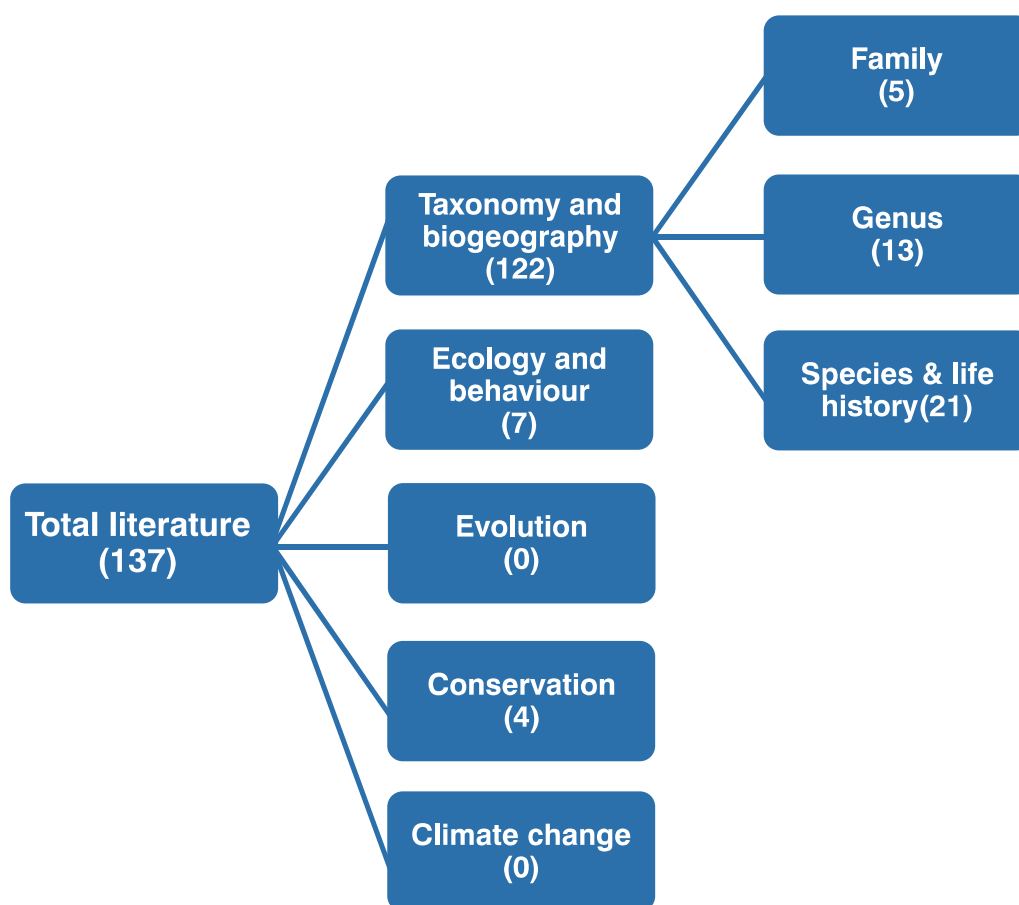


Figure 6.7 Number of publications on odonates of the Indian Himalayan Region in different subject categories

In early 19th century, most of the scientific work was based on odonate fauna taxonomic inventory and distribution. But after 1930 the trend of research shifted towards behaviour, ecology and biogeography. But the timing of research was mostly based on individuality (e.g. Laidlaw, Fraser, Asahina, Kumar etc.) (Table 6.1). Due to World War-II, most of the British researchers left the country and overall research in this field suffered for few years. After the war was over, few researchers came back to India and continued their passion towards dragonfly and damselfly. From early 50's Indian field researchers started their quest in Odonatology and brought remarkable contribution since early 60's. However, still there is no such work related to conservation, evolution and climate change in the IHR.

Table 6.1. Subject area, key past research priorities and research gap and future potentialities

Subject Area	Key past research priorities	Research Gap and future priorities
Ecology and Behaviour	Distribution Life cycle stages Migration pattern	Proper Distribution map Taxonomic biases Very less studies
Taxonomy	Morphological Taxonomy	Molecular Taxonomy Isolation and Speciation study based on molecular level Geometry based morphometry
Evolution	Not studies yet, few hypothesis exist	Should be more study widely considering all levels of study Evolution and climate change
Conservation	In few pockets and patches	Should focused on wetland conservation by focusing this taxa as one of the prime
Climate change	Not studies yet but few geomorphic and diurnal changes were noted	Should study Phylogenetic Affinities and Past Climate Distribution of critically endangered and fragmented species population.

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Author Index

Butterfly

- Acharya, B.K.
001, 002, 003
- Ackery, P.R.
159
- Adhikary, B.S.
145
- Agarwala, B.K.
004
- Ahmad, R.
150
- Alfred, J.R.B.
005
- Antram, C.B.
006
- Arora, G.S.
007, 008, 009, 010, 011, 012, 013, 014, 015
- Arya, M.
096, 097
- Athreya, R.
016, 017
- Avinoff, A.
018
- Azim, M.N.
155
- Baindur, A.
019
- Bala, A.
020, 021
- Balint, Z.S.
022
- Banerjee, K.K.
169
- Bang Hass, O.
023
- Banyal, H.S.
202, 203
- Bashir, I.K.
101
- Beccaloni, G.W.
159
- Bernanrdi, G.
024
- Betts, F.N.
025
- Bhagat, R.C.
150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155
- Bhandari, R.S.
196
- Bhardwaj, M.
026, 027, 028, 029, 030, 031, 032, 250, 251, 256
- Bhardwaj, S.
241
- Bhargav, V.
250, 252, 256
- Bhat, D.M.
153, 155
- Bhatt, B.B.
039, 085
- Bhattacharya, D.P.
033, 034, 035
- Bhutia, K.D.
158
- Bingham, C.T.
036, 037
- Bogtapa, S.
038
- Borang, A.
039
- Borkotoki, A.
039
- Bruna, C.D.
040
- Butler, A.G.
041
- Cantlie, K.
042
- Chanda, S.K.
266
- Chandel, S.
043
- Chandra, K.
186
- Chaturvedi, M.
044
- Chaturvedi, N.C.
092
- Chaudhury, M.
009, 010, 083
- Chaudhury, P.R.
004
- Chettri, B.
001
- Choudhury, S.R.
004
- Cotton, A.M.
156
- D'Abrera, B.
045
- Dar, M.A.
102, 150
- Das, J.
046
- Das, N.
167
- Das, R.P.
047
- Das, S.M.
048, 049
- De Lesse, H.
024
- De Niceville, L.
050, 051, 052, 053, 054, 055, 056, 057, 058, 119, 132
- De Rhe-Philipe, G.W.V.
059, 060, 061, 062
- De, J.K.
047
- Devi, A.
167
- Devi, R.
107
- Dobhal, R.
256
- Doherty, W.
063, 064, 065
- Duda, P.L.
048
- Durairaj, P.
066
- Eisner, C.
067
- Elwes, H.J.
068, 069, 070
- Evans, B.W.H.
071, 072, 073, 074, 075, 076, 077, 078, 079, 116
- Gallo, E.
040
- Gasse, P.V.
080
- Ghorai, N.
081, 169
- Ghosh, A.K.
082
- Ghosh, H.C.
136
- Ghosh, S.K.
010, 083
- Gogoi, M.J.
084, 085
- Goswami, R.
098
- Greeshma, M.
086
- Gupta, I.J.
087
- Gupta, M.
020, 021
- Gupta, S.K.
108
- Hannington, F.
088, 089
- Haribal, M.
090, 091, 092
- Hernandez L.M.
159
- Home, W.M.L.
093
- Jamdar, N.
094
- Jhaveri, R.
220
- Jiju, J.S.
095
- Joshi, P.C.
096, 097
- Kalita, J.
039

- Karimbumkara, S.N
098
- Karmakar, T.
220
- Katayama, T.
099
- Kehimkar, I.
100, 243
- Khan, M.R.
101
- Khan, Z.H.
102
- Kitching, I.J.
159
- Kittur, S.
103, 256
- Krishna, M.
167
- Kumar, A.
104, 167
- Kumar, C.
105
- Kumar, K.
097
- Kumar, N.
249
- Kumar, P.
104, 106, 107, 108, 109
- Kumar, R.
110, 111, 180
- Kumar, V.
043
- Kumari, A.
146, 147
- Kunte, K.
112, 113, 158, 220, 221, 222
- Lang, A.M.
114
- Larsen, T.B.
115
- Leslie, G.A.
116
- Lesse, H.
117
- Limboo, N.
118
- Mackinnon, P.W.
119
- Malhotra, Y.R.
048
- Malik, I.A.
101
- Malik, S.
120
- Mandal, D.K.
011, 121, 122
- Mani, M.S.
123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131
- Marshall, G.F.L.
132
- Mathur, P.K.
253
- Mattu, V.K.
107, 111, 134, 237, 239, 240
- Mazumdar, M.
167
- Mehra, B.S.
254
- Mehta, H.S.
005, 012, 013, 133, 134, 239, 240
- Mir, A.
101
- Mitra, B.
133
- Moller, O.
070
- Mondal, D.K.
014, 015, 135, 136
- Moore, F.
137, 138, 139, 140, 141
- Mudoi, P.
167
- Mulla, N.D.
092
- Naro, T.
142
- Ollenbach, O.C.
143
- Pachoni, A.K.
168
- Padmawathe, R.
103, 256
- Pajni, H.R.
144
- Palot, J.
186
- Pandav, B.
145
- Pandey, R.
197
- Parida, P.
046
- Pathania, P.C.
146, 147, 154
- Patiyal, R.
043
- Peile, H.D.
148
- Poornima, R.
270
- Qureshi, A.A.
149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155
- Racheli, T.
156
- Radhakrishnan, C.
157
- Rai, S.
158
- Raina, R.H.
102
- Ramamurthy, V.V.
102
- Rawat, G.S.
236
- Robinson, G.S.
159
- Rose, H.S.
144, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165
- Roy, P.K.
098, 166, 223
- Saha, G.K.
047
- Sanyal, A.K.
032, 047, 251
- Sarma, H.N.
235
- Sarma, K.
167
- Sarmesh, A.
085
- Sbordoni, V.
040
- Sebastian, J.
168
- Sengupta, P.
081, 169
- Sevastopulo, D.G.
170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179
- Sharma, B.P.
043
- Sharma, K.L.
180
- Sharma, N.
160, 161, 162, 163, 181
- Sharma, R.M.
133, 134, 182
- Sharma, S.
021
- Shukla, J.P.N.
087
- Shull, E.M.
183, 184
- Sidhu, A.K.
164, 165, 185, 186
- Singh, A.P.
032, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199
- Singh, H.
270
- Singh, R.
198
- Singh, R.P.
200
- Singh, S.
126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 201
- Singh, S.K.
255
- Singh, V.
202, 203
- Sinha, B.
066

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| Sivakumar, K.
103, 145, 256 | Tara, J.S.
020, 021 | Venkatesh, V.
267 |
| Smetacek, P.
204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211,
212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219 | Tewari, R.
236 | Verma, K.D.
049 |
| Sondhi, S.
142, 199, 220, 221, 222, 223 | Thakur, M.L.
237 | Vijayan, L.
002, 003 |
| Sondhi, Y.
220 | Thakur, M.S.
133, 134, 238, 239, 240 | Virkar, P.S.
268 |
| South, R.
224, 225 | Thakur, S.
109, 241 | Walia, V.K.
012, 013, 144 |
| Stempffer, H.
226 | Thomas-Glover, J.W.
242 | Watson, E.Y.
269 |
| Swinhoe, C.
227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232 | Thombre, D.
243 | Weiss, J.C.
067 |
| Tahir, S.I.
150 | Uniyal, V.P.
028, 029, 030, 031, 032, 103, 145, 244,
245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252,
253, 254, 255, 256 | Wiswanathan, G.
270 |
| Talbot, G.
233, 234 | Varshney, R.K.
257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264,
265, 266 | Wynter-Blyth, M. A.
276 |
| Talukdar, S.
235 | Vasudevan, K.
145 | Wynter-Blyth, M.A.
271, 272, 273, 274, 275 |
| Tamuk, M.
039 | | Zaffar, N.
021 |



Author Index

Odonata

Asahina, S.
001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008,
009, 010
Atkinson, E.T.
011
Babu, R.
012, 013, 014, 015, 016, 096
Bayal, H.S.
125
Bhargava, R.N.
017
Bhasin, G.D.
018, 019
Bisht, R.S.
020
Cafri, S.D.
021
Centina, P.
021
Chakraborty, P.
126
Chakravarty, J.
123
Chandra, K.
022
Chandra, M.
023
Cinha, C.
075
Das, S.M.
020
Davies, D.A.L.
024, 025
Dhanze, R.
121
Dow, R.
089
Fraser, F.C.
026, 027, 028, 029, 030, 031, 032, 033,
034, 035, 036, 037, 038, 039, 040, 041,
042, 043, 044, 045, 046, 047, 048, 049,
050, 051
Garrison, R.W.
052
Ghosh, A.K.
053
Ghosh, S.K.
107
Gupta, S.
132, 133
Hamalainen, M.
054, 055
Juneja, D.P.
067
Khaliq, A.
056
Khanna, V.
068
Kiauta, B.

057
Kumar, A.
058, 059, 060, 061, 062, 063, 064, 065,
066, 067, 068, 069, 070, 119, 120
Lahiri, A.R.
071, 072, 073, 074, 075, 076, 077, 097,
098
Laidlaw, F.F.
078, 079, 080, 081, 082, 083, 084, 085
Lieftinck, M.A.
086
Mathur, R.K.
135
Mitra, A.
069, 087, 088, 089, 135
Mitra, T.R.
013, 090, 091, 092, 093, 094, 095, 096,
097, 098
Mondal, S.B.
108
Nair, M.V.
099, 100
Nandy, S.
014, 016
Navas, R.P.L.
101
Nesemann, H.
102
O'Brien, M.F.
052
Prasad, M.
070, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109,
110, 111, 112, 122
Ram, R.
112
Roonwal, M.L.
019
Sahni, D.N.
113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118
Sandhu, R.
076
Sangal, S.K.
119, 120
Sengupta, T.
053
Shah, D.N.
102
Shah, R.D.T.
102
Sharma, G.
089
Sharma, I.
121
Singh, A.
109, 122
Singh, O.T.
123
Singh, S.
124
Singh, V.
125
Sinha, C.

077, 110, 126, 127
Sivaramakrishnan, K.G.
131
Srinivasan, G.
015
Srivastava, V.D.
127
St. Quentin, D.
128
Steinmann, H.
129
Subramanian, K.A.
016, 089, 100, 130, 131
Takhelmayum, K.
132, 133
Terzani, F.
021
Tobin, P.
024, 025
Tsuda, S.
134
Uniyal, V.P.
135
Varatharajan, R.
123
Varshney, R.K.
111
Von, N.E.
052
Walia, G.K.
076

